
David Durand-Guédy. *An Emblematic Family of Seljuq Iran: The Khujandīs of Iṣfahān*

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- 1 This article is a comparatively direct enlargement of the monograph on Iṣfahān quoted above. The basic assumption is that the Seljuqs – as all pre-modern rulers – did not have the means to control the provinces directly. Imperial rule therefore was founded on an implicit contract with local power-holders; this in turn was based on common interest. “I [the sultan] recognize your role in the city by appointing you to the *riyāsa*, thereby making you my main interlocutor; in exchange for which you recognize my authority and you will ensure that the taxes are raised” (191).
- 2 The article is a case study of this relationship. It traces the history of the Ḥujandī family from the mid-11th century to the 1230s, over no less than eight generations. The Ḥujandīs started in Iṣfahān as newcomers, they were transferred into that city from Transoxiana as heads of the Šāfi‘ī community. It was in the early 12th century, when the Iṣfahānī notables (and many commoners) fought the Ismā‘īlīs in what amounted to a regional civil war, that the Ḥujandīs “naturalised” themselves. They held important positions in the urban government, above all the position of *ra’īs*, for generations. Whereas they were Muslim scholars at the outset, the later representatives were not fully accepted as such. Therefore, within the *a’yān*, they stand for a group which has received very little attention until now: hereditary leaders who did not base their influence on positions (or achievements) in a Muslim religious or juridical context. As

such local leaders, the Khujandīs were important and reliable enough to hold Işfahān and the entire region within the Seljuqid domains during and after the dynastic wars which began with Malikšāh's death in 1092. Sultan Mas'ūd (1134-52) did not even have to come to Işfahān regularly (see "Where did the Saljūqs live?") – the contractual relationship with the local leaders was enough.

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